

HONORING THEODIA GILLESPIE
FOR HER 2025 LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Theodia Gillespie, President and CEO of the Quad County Urban League for receiving the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Aurora African American Heritage Advisory Board—a fitting tribute to nearly four decades of tireless commitment to empowering communities and changing lives.

The Aurora African American Heritage Advisory Board honors individuals who embody excellence, dedication, and a commitment to the betterment of society. Theodia is a shining example of these values, as her lifelong pursuit of excellence and equality has been the foundation of her work, advocating for a “hand up, not a handout” approach that empowers individuals and families to create sustainable career paths and vibrant, thriving communities.

Since joining the Quad County Urban League in 1984 and assuming the role of President and CEO in 1993, Mrs. Gillespie has been a transformative leader. Under her leadership, the organization has experienced tremendous growth in education and workforce development programs, providing countless individuals with the tools they need to build better futures.

Her leadership has earned her numerous prestigious accolades, including: The Best Supporting Organization Award from the Aurora Hollywood Casino, The Good Samaritan Award from WBBM-TV, The Lifetime Achievement Award from the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, and The Legacy Recognition Award from the National Urban League.

Beyond her role at the Quad County Urban League, Mrs. Gillespie continues to serve her community as Chairperson of the Board for The Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry and as a Board Member for East Aurora School District 131 Board of Education, Forefront, and the Dunham Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have such a dedicated leader in my district. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Theodia Gillespie on receiving this distinguished recognition. Her leadership, advocacy, and service have made an indelible mark on the lives of many.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes due to recently giving birth. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 51; and NAY on Roll Call No. 52.

HONORING DR. KEITH D. THIBO

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Dr. Keith D. Thibo, who celebrates forty years pastoring at Bay View Baptist Church in Washington, Illinois and fifty years in full-time ministry on March 2, 2025.

Born and raised in Michigan, Pastor Thibo first attended Bob Jones University before transferring to Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown, Wisconsin. In May of 2010, he received his Doctorate of Divinity from Hyles-Anderson College.

Pastor Thibo met and married his wife, Christine, on December 20, 1978. He was called to Bay View Baptist Church in March of 1985 and, with the support of his wife and daughters, he founded King's Kids Clubs, a children's Bible memorization program. King's Kids Clubs has impacted over 2,000 churches in over 100 countries around the world and thousands of young people. Pastor Thibo has also authored four books on Bible Doctrine and Apologetics. His ministry has not only shaped the lives of his congregants but has made a lasting impact on faith worldwide.

Pastor Thibo's remarkable life of service, faith, and leadership will continue to inspire all who have been touched by his ministry. Please join me in thanking Pastor Thibo for his many years of service.

RECOGNIZING MR. GERARD J. GRIMALDI ON HIS RETIREMENT AND EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR A LIFETIME OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity to recognize a great Missourian, Mr. Gerard Joseph Grimaldi, for his exemplary personal and professional accomplishments as he begins his next chapter of life, enjoying retirement. An experienced leader, dedicated professional, and tireless advocate, Gerard serves as a prime example of a true public servant, and most importantly, a kind, caring, and genuine human being.

A Kansas City, Missouri, native, Gerald was born on September 16, 1959, to loving parents, Mary Jane and Frank Grimaldi. Along with his five brothers and sisters, Gerard grew up in the Crestwood neighborhood and their family was active at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, just off Troost Avenue. His parents, with strong Catholic roots, instilled a deep sense of faith, public service, and commitment to others, particularly the underserved, in all of their children.

Gerard would continue his Jesuit education at Rockhurst High School, before attending the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he would graduate with honors in 1980 with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Following graduation, Gerard briefly enjoyed working as a reporter for the Kansas City Labor Beacon,

before joining the staff of U.S. Senator Thomas F. Eagleton. As the Senator's staff assistant, Gerard handled constituent services, health care access, and economic development for the Western region of Missouri.

Known for his dedication, responsiveness, and affable personality, Gerard was hired in 1985 to serve as the District Director for U.S. Representative Alan Wheat, one of my predecessors. In that role, Gerard led the District-based team, while working closely with the Washington, D.C. legislative staff and leading the office's media strategy. Gerard worked on several successful efforts, including a new U.S. Courthouse, Bruce Watkins Drive, and establishment of the Harry S. Truman National historic site. He would serve in that role for a decade, working on behalf of the people of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District.

Following Representative Wheat's unsuccessful bid for the United States Senate in 1994, Gerard continued working for the newly elected U.S. Representative Karen McCarthy, to share his knowledge of the Fifth District and ensure a smooth transition, before joining Kaiser Permanente, a nonprofit health plan in 1995. During his six-year tenure at Kaiser, Gerard would ultimately be elevated to Vice President for Human Resources and Public Affairs. Through this experience, Gerald's knowledge of the local health care system continued to expand, and he was asked to serve on numerous civic organizations, including the Jackson County Mental Health Levy Board of Trustees, where he would serve as Board Chair for several years. Additionally, as I was serving as Mayor of Kansas City during this time, I had the pleasure of asking Gerard to serve on the Mayor's Race Relations Task Force and on the Board of Directors of the Mayor's Corps of Progress.

For the past nearly 24 years, Gerard has worked at Truman Medical Centers (now called University Health), our area's safety net provider, helping to advance issues of health care access and health equity. He has served as the Chief Health Policy and Government Relations Officer, where he serves in a leadership role to help educate and advocate for the hospital system, to ensure adequate local, state, and federal resources are available to meet their mission. While Gerard considers himself a lifelong learner, he has been instrumental in helping to educate others on the health care needs in our region, particularly for some of our most vulnerable populations.

A comprehensive list of Gerard's accomplishments would be too lengthy, but just a few examples of his impact, include: securing post-9/11 funding to modernize the hospital for bioterrorism and mass casualty incidents; leading multiple public election campaigns for property tax levy approval; securing approval of multiple bond issues for capital improvements on two hospital campuses; supporting the Hospital Hill property acquisition efforts and urban renewal attainment; securing numerous Affordable Care Act grants; securing the hospital's selection with MO HealthNet; working alongside dozens of stakeholders to secure Missouri Medicaid expansion; advocating for vital hospital support during the COVID-19 global pandemic; providing community leadership by ensuring outreach and vaccinations were available during the pandemic; securing multiple sources of public funding for a Center for Recovery and Wellness, a substance use disorder outpatient center that